

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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EB-08 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 SP-02 STR-04
TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 L-03
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FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2966

INFO ALL EC CAPS 3095

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ASEAN, EA, ETRD, PFOR, EEC

SUBJECT: EC OFFICIALS COMMENT ON EC EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS
WITH SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES

REF: (A) 76 EC BRUSSELS 12293, (B) EC BRUSSELS A-456, (C) 76
EC BRUSSELS 10721

1. SUMMARY: COMMISSION OFFICIALS OUTLINE PLANS FOR
SEVERAL SEMINARS AND STUDIES TO PROMOTE EC/ASEAN
RELATIONS. THEY ALSO PLAN TO CONTINUE MODEST AMOUNTS
OF DEVELOPMENT AID THROUGH THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
TO THE ASEAN COUNTRIES AND PERHAPS TO PROPOSE AID PRO-
GRAMS FOR VIET-NAM, BURMA AND LAOS. THESE LATTER TWO
COUNTRIES INDICATE INCREASED INTEREST IN THE COMMUNITY.
END SUMMARY.

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2. EC COMMISSION CHIEF OF ASIAN AFFAIRS, JOHN HANSEN,
SAYS THAT THE EC IS DISAPPOINTED OVER THE MEAGER
RESULTS OF THE RECENT ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING IN
MANILA. THE EC, NEVERTHELESS, PLANS TO PRESS AHEAD
WITH ITS EFFORTS TO PROMOTE ASEAN. IT RECENTLY
HIRED CONSULTANTS TO ANALYZE AREAS IN WHICH ASEAN

HAS A COMPARATIVE TRADE ADVANTAGES WITH EC. THIS STUDY WILL BE USED TO DIRECT EC TRADE PROMOTION EFFORTS. THE EC ALSO IS GOING AHEAD WITH PLANS TO HOLD A THREE-DAY CONFERENCE IN BRUSSELS ON APRIL 4-6. THIS WILL INVOLVE SENIOR REPRESENTATIVES FROM ASEAN AND EC INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL SECTORS. (SEE REF A.) HANSON EXPECTS FINANCE OR ECONOMIC MINISTERS TO ATTEND FROM EACH OF THE ASEAN COUNTRIES. THE EC WILL ALSO HOLD A SEMINAR ON THE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY IN SINGAPORE IN SEPTEMBER. THIS IS PART OF AN EC EFFORT TO PROMOTE EUROPEAN PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN ASEAN.

3. COMMISSION OFFICIALS ADD THAT THE EC IS CONSIDERING EXPANDING ITS DEVELOPMENT AID TO SOUTHEAST ASIA. THE EC HAS INCREASED ITS 1977 AID TO NON-ASSOCIATED COUNTRIES TO 45 MILLION UNITS OF ACCOUNT (ABOUT \$50 MILLION). IT WILL CONTINUE TO CHANNEL MODEST AMOUNTS THROUGH THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK TO ASEAN COUNTRIES. COMMISSION OFFICIALS ALSO ARE CONSIDERING EC AID PROGRAMS TO VIET-NAM, LAOS AND PERHAPS BURMA. THE BURMESE HAVE HELD THE EC AT ARMS-LENGTH IN PAST YEARS, BUT COMMISSION OFFICIALS REPORT RECENT INDICATIONS OF INCREASED BURMESE INTEREST. SIMILARLY, LAOS IS REPORTEDLY CONSIDERING ASKING ONE OF ITS AMBASSADORS IN EUROPE TO BE ASSIGNED ALSO TO THE EC. FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, EC RELATIONS HAVE BEEN IN A VIRTUAL LIMBO WITH LAOS BECAUSE THERE HAVE BEEN NO OFFICIAL CONTRACTS. COMMISSION OFFICIALS WOULD ENCOURAGE THESE COUNTRIES BY OFFERING MODEST AMOUNTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF AID TO THEM.

4. A COUNCIL WORKING GROUP CONTINUES TO DISCUSS HOW THE EC SHOULD HANDLE TRADE WITH VIET-NAM. PERMDEL OFFICIALS TELL US THAT MOST MEMBER STATES FAVOR THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL OF INCORPORATING VIET-NAM INTO ITS REGIME OF UNILATERALLY IMPOSED QUOTAS. THE EC, HOWEVER, ALSO WANTS TO EXTEND TO IT THE QUOTA-FREE "LIBERALIZED" TRADE REGIME FOR A SMALL NUMBER OF PRODUCTS WHICH SOUTH VIET-NAM HAD PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED (SEE REF C). FRANCE AND ITALY ARE CURRENTLY HOLDING OUT FOR A MORE LIBERAL SYSTEM THAN THIS PROPOSAL. HINTON

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